

# THE REFUGEES

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(Continued from Thursday.)

"His men are over my nose and moths in a cloth bale. No place is free from them. He sits in the room which should be mine, his great boots on my Spanish leather chairs, his pipe in his mouth, his wine pot at his elbow and he talks a hissing and an abominable. He has beaten old Pierre of the warehouse and thrust me into the cellar."

"Ha!"  
"Because I have dragged him back when in his drunken love he would have thrown his arms about your cousin Adele."

"Oh!" The young man's color had been rising and his brows knitting at each successive charge, but at this last his anger boiled over, and he hurried forward with fury in his face, dragging his elderly companion by the elbow.

"How did you come, uncle?"  
"In a caleche."  
"Where is it?"  
"That is it, beyond the auberge."

"Come, let us make for it."  
"And you, Amory, are you coming?"  
"My faith, it is time that I came, from what you tell me. There is room for a man with a sword at his side in this establishment of yours."

"But what would you do?"  
"I would have a word with this Captain Dalbert. Ha, here comes our caleche! Whip up, driver, and five lvsres to you if you pass the gate of the Invalides within the hour."

It was no light matter to drive fast in an age of springless carriages and deeply rutted roads, but the driver lashed at his two rough, unclipped horses, and the caleche jolted and clattered upon its way.

"When was all this?" asked the guardsman.  
"It was yesterday night."  
"And where is Adele now?"  
"She is at home."  
"And this Dalbert?"  
"Oh, he is there also!"

"What! You have left her in his power while you came away to Versailles?"  
"She is locked in her room."  
"Pah! What is a lock?" The young man raved with his hands in the air at the thought of his own impotence.

"And Pierre is there."  
"He is useless."  
"And Amos Green."  
"Ah, that is better. He is a man by the look of him."

"His mother was one of our own folk from Staten Island, near Manhattan. She was one of those scattered lambs who fled early before the wolves when first it was seen that the king's hand waxed heavily upon Israel. He speaks French, and yet he is neither French to the eye nor are his ways like our ways."

"And you have left him in the house?"  
"Yes; he was sat with this Dalbert, smoking with him and telling him strange tales."

"What guard could he be—a stranger in a strange land? You did ill to leave Adele thus, uncle."  
"She is in God's hands, Amory."  
"I trust so. Oh, I am on fire to be there!"

Soon, as the road curved down to the river bank, the city wall grew nearer and nearer until they had passed the southern gate and were rattling over the stony causeway, leaving the broad Luxembourg upon their right and Colbert's last work, the Invalides, upon their left. The young officer had his head still thrust out of the window, but his view was obscured by a broad gilded carriage which lumbered heavily along in front of them. As the road broadened, however, it swerved to one side, and he was able to catch a glimpse of the Catinat house.

It was surrounded on every side by an immense crowd.  
The house of the Huguenot merchant was a tall, narrow building, standing at the corner of the Rue St. Martin and the Rue de Biron. It was four stories in height, grim and grave like its owner, with high peaked roof, long diamond paned windows, a framework of black wood, with gray plaster filling the interstices, and five stone steps which led up to the narrow and somber door. The upper story was but a warehouse, in which the trader kept his stock, but the second and third were furnished with balconies edged with stout wooden balustrades. As the uncle and the nephew sprang out of the caleche they found themselves upon the outskirts of a dense crowd of people, who were swaying and tossing with excitement, their chins all thrown forward and their gaze directed upward. Following their eyes, the young officer saw a sight which left him standing bereft of every sensation save amazement.

From the upper balcony there was hanging head downward a man clad in the bright blue coat and white breeches of one of the king's dragoons. His hat and wig had dropped off, and his close cropped head swung slowly backward and forward a good fifty feet above the pavement. His voice resounded over the whole place until the air was filled with his screams for mercy.

Above him at the corner of the balcony there stood a young man who leaned with a bent back over the

balustrade and who held the dangling dragon by either ankle. His face, however, was not directed toward his victim, but was half turned over his shoulder to confront a group of soldiers who were clustering at the long, open window which opened out into the balcony.

Suddenly the crowd gave a groan of excitement. The young man had released his grip upon one of the ankles, and the dragon hung now by one only, his other leg flapping helplessly in the air.

"Pull me up, son of the devil, pull me up!" he screamed. "Would you murder me, then? Help, good people, help!"

"Do you want to come up, captain?" said the strong, clear voice of the young man above him, speaking excellent French.

"Yes, sacred name of God, yes!"  
"Order off your men, then."  
"Away, you dolts, you imbeciles! Do you wish to see me dashed to pieces? Away, I say! Off with you!"

"That is better," said the youth when the soldiers had vanished from the window. He gave a tug at the dragon's leg as he spoke, which jerked him up so far that he could twist round and catch hold of the lower edge of the balcony. "How do you find yourself now?" he asked.

"Let me up, sir, let me up!"  
"All in good time. I fear that it is inconvenient to you to talk with your heels in the air. I am going to pull you up, but only on conditions."  
"Oh, they are granted! I am slipping!"

"You will leave this house—you and your men. You will not trouble this old man or this young girl any further. Do you promise?"  
"Oh, yes; we shall go! Only pull me up!"

"Not so fast. It may be easier to talk to you like this. I do not know how the laws are over here. Maybe this sort of thing is not permitted. You will promise me that I shall have no trouble over the matter."  
"None, none. Only pull me up!"  
"Very good. Come along."

He dragged at the dragon's leg, while the other gripped his way up the balustrade until amid a buzz of congratulation from the crowd he tumbled all in a heap over the rail on to the balcony, where he lay for a few moments as he had fallen. Then, staggering to his feet, without a glance at his opponent, he rushed with a bellow of rage through the open window.

While this little drama had been enacted overhead the young guardsman had shaken off his first stupor of amazement and had pushed his way through the crowd with such vigor that he and his companion had nearly reached the bottom of the steps. The uniform of the king's guard was in itself a passport anywhere, and the face of old Catinat was so well known in the district that every one drew back to clear a path for him toward his house. The door was swung open for them, and an old servant stood wringing his hands in the dark passage.

"Oh, master! Oh, master!" he cried. "Such doings! Such infamy!"  
As he spoke a clatter and shouting which had burst out again upstairs ended suddenly in a tremendous crash, with volleys of oaths and a prolonged bumping and smashing, which shook the old house to its foundations. The soldier and the Huguenot rushed swiftly up the first flight of stairs and were about to ascend the second one, from the head of which the uproar seemed to proceed, when four men, so locked together that they formed but one rolling bundle, came thudding down amid a debris of splintered stair rails and writhed and struggled upon the landing, staggering up, falling down, and all breathing together like the wind in a chimney. So twisted and twined were they that it was hard to pick one from the other save that the innermost was clad in black Flemish cloth, while the three who clung to him were soldiers of the king. Yet so strong and vigorous was the man whom they tried to hold that as often as he could find his feet he dragged them after him from end to end of the passage, as a bear might pull the cubs which had fastened on to his haunches. An officer, who had rushed down at the heels of the brawlers, thrust his hands in to catch the civilian by the throat, but he whipped them back again with an oath as the man's strong white teeth met in his left thumb. Clapping the wound to his mouth, he flashed out his sword and was about to drive it through the body of his unarmed opponent when De Catinat sprang forward and caught him by the wrist.

"You villain, Dalbert!" he cried.  
The sudden appearance of one of the king's own bodyguard had a magic effect upon the brawlers. Dalbert sprang back, with his thumb still in his mouth and his sword drooping, scowling darkly at the newcomer. His troopers had released their victim and stood panting in a line, while the young man leaned against the wall, brushing the dust from his black coat.

"I had a little account to settle with you before, Dalbert," said De Catinat, unsheathing his rapier. Your sword, sir."

"I have no quarrel with you."

"Not" De Catinat stepped forward and struck him across the face with his open hand. "It seems to me that you have one now," said he.

"Hell and furies!" screamed the captain. "To your arms, men! Hold, there, from above! Cut down this fellow and seize your prisoner! Hold! In the king's name!"

At his call a dozen more troopers came hurrying down the stairs, while the three upon the landing advanced upon their former antagonist. He slipped by them, however, and caught out of the old merchant's hand the thick oak stick.

"I am with you, sir," said he, taking his place beside the guardsman.  
"Call off your canaille and fight me like a gentleman," cried De Catinat.

"A gentleman! Hark to the bourgeois Huguenot, whose family peddles chob!"  
"You coward. I will write liar on you with my sword point!"

He sprang forward and sent in a thrust which might have found its way to Dalbert's heart had the heavy saber of a dragoon not descended from the side and shorn his more delicate weapon off close to the hilt. With a shout of triumph his enemy sprang furiously upon him with his rapier shortened, but was met by a sharp blow from the cudgel of the young stranger which sent his weapon tinkling on to the ground. A trooper, however, on the stair had pulled out a pistol and, clapping it within a foot of the guardsman's head, was about to settle the combat once and forever when a little old gentleman who had quietly ascended from the street and who had been looking on with an amused and interested smile at this fiery sequence of events took a sudden quick step forward and ordered all parties to drop their weapons with a voice so decided, so stern and so full of authority that the saber points all clinked down together upon the parquet flooring as though it were a part of their daily drill.

"Upon my word, gentlemen; upon my word!" he said, looking sternly from one to the other. In his gait and bearing he had a dainty strut and backward cock of the head, which, taken with his sharp black eyes, his high, thin features and his assured manner, would impress a stranger with the feeling that this was a man of power. And, indeed, in France or out of it there were few to whom this man's name was not familiar, for in all France the only figure which loomed up as large as that of the king was this very little gentleman who stood now, with gold snuffbox in one hand and deep laced handkerchief in the other, upon the landing of the Huguenot's house, for who was there who did not know the last of the great French nobles, the bravest of French captains, the beloved Conde, victor of Rocroy and hero of the Fronde?

De Catinat raised the stump of his sword in a salute.  
"Heh, heh!" cried the old soldier, peering at him. "You were with me on the Rhine—heh? I know your face, captain. But the household was with Turanne."

"I was in the regiment of Picardy, your highness. De Catinat is my name."  
"Yes, yes. But you, sir, who the devil are you?"  
"Captain Dalbert, your highness, of the Languedoc Blue dragoons."

"Hey! I was passing in my carriage and I saw you standing on your head in the air. The young man let you up on conditions, as I understood."  
"He swore he would go from the house," cried the young stranger. "Yet when I had let him up he set his men upon me, and we all came downstairs together."

"My faith, you seem to have left little behind you," said Conde, smiling, as he glanced at the litter which was strewn all over the floor. "And so you broke your parole, Captain Dalbert?"  
"I could not hold treaty with a Huguenot and an enemy of the king," said the dragoon sulkily.

"You could hold treaty, it appears, but not keep it. And why did you let him go, sir?"  
"I believed his promise. I have been used to deal with Indians."  
"Heh! And you think an Indian's word is better than that of an officer in the king's dragoons?"  
"I did not think so an hour ago."  
"You are very strong, monsieur," said Conde, glancing keenly at the broad shoulders and arching chest of the young stranger. "You are from Canada, I presume?"  
"I have been there, sir. But I am from New York."

"And how came you to speak French?"  
"My mother was of French blood."  
"And how long have you been in Paris?"  
"A day."  
"Heh! And you already begin to throw your mother's country folk out of windows!"  
"He was annoying a young maid, sir, and I asked him to stop, whereon he whipped out his sword and would have slain me had I not closed with him, upon which he called upon his fellows to aid him. To keep them off I swore that I would drop him over if they moved a step. Yet when I let him go they set upon me again."  
"Hem! You did very well. You are young, but you have resource."  
"I was reared in the woods, sir."  
"If there are many of your kidney you may give my friend De Frontenac some work ere he found this empire of which he talks. But how is this, Captain Dalbert? What have you to say?"

"The king's orders, your highness, are to use every means which may drive these people into the true church."  
"On my word, you look a very fine apostle and a pretty champion for a holy cause," said Conde, glancing sardoniously out of his twinkling black eyes at the brutal face of the dragoon.

"Take your men out of this, sir, and never venture to set foot again across this threshold."  
"But the king's command, your highness."  
"I will tell the king when I see him that I left soldiers and that I find brigands. Not a word, sir! Away! You take your shame with you, and you leave your honor behind." He had turned in an instant from the sneering, strutting old beau to the fierce soldier with set face and eye of fire. Dalbert shrank back from his baleful gaze, and, muttering an order to his men, they fled off down the stair with clattering feet and clank of sabers.  
"Your highness," said the old Huguenot, coming forward and throwing open one of the doors which led from the landing, "you have indeed been a savior of Israel and a stumbling block to the froward this day. Will you not deign to rest under my roof and even to take a cup of wine ere you go onward?"  
Conde raised his thick eyebrows at the Scriptural fashion of the merchant's speech, but he bowed courteously to the invitation.  
"My carriage waits below," said he, "and I must not delay longer. It is not often that I leave my castle of Chantilly to come to Paris, and it was a fortunate chance which made me pass in time to be of service to honest men." He inclined again his bejeweled head and strutted off in his dainty, dandified fashion. From the window De Catinat could see him step into the same gilded chariot which had stood in his way as he drove from Versailles.  
"By my faith," said he, turning to the young American, "we all owe thanks to the prince, but it seems to me, sir, that we are your debtors even more. You have risked your life for my cousin, and but for your cudgel Dalbert would have had his blade through me when he had me at a vantage. Your hand, sir! These are things which a man cannot forget."  
"Aye, you may well thank him, Amory," broke in the old Huguenot, who had returned after escorting his illustrious guest to the carriage. "He has been raised up as a champion for the afflicted and as a helper for those who are in need."  
But their young visitor appeared to be more embarrassed by their thanks than by any of his preceding adventures. The blood flushed to his weather-tanned, clear cut face, as smooth as that of a boy and yet marked by firmness of lip and shrewdness in the keen blue eyes.  
"I have a mother and two sisters over the water," said he diffidently.  
"And you honor women for their sake?"  
"We always honor women over there. Perhaps it is that we have so few. Over in these old countries you have not learned what it is to be without them. I have felt what a good woman is and how, like the sunshine, she draws out of one's soul all that is purest and best."  
"Indeed, the ladies should be very much obliged to monsieur, who is as eloquent as he is brave," said Adele Catinat, who, standing in the open door, had listened to the latter part of his remarks.  
"Much of my life has been spent in the woods," said he, "and one speaks so little there that one comes to forget how to do it. It was for this that my father wished me to stay some time in France, for he would not have me grow up a mere trapper and trader."  
"And how long do you stop in Paris?" asked the guardsman.

(To Be Continued.)

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